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18th February 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd and Hobart Coaches service to the Kingborough Municipality.

I am writing to you about my concerns of the public transport system servicing the Kingston, Kingston Beach and Blackmans Bay area

A number of years ago Metro purchased Hobart Coaches. We, the residents of Kingborough were in favour of the purchase, as we believed that we would then be on fare parity with other Metro services. This has not happened. Our fares are higher than Metro and the drivers of Hobart Coaches are paid lower wages than their Metro counterparts.

We, as a community are being discriminated against by differing price structures as applied to other municipalities who have Metro services. Metro may argue that there is not the community demand for changing the service to Kingborough, however the service must be in place and the population educated to be able utilize that service. The service to date has been expensive and inadequate. Therefore the residents of Kingborough have had to learnt to rely on private transport. The argument is not which came first, the chicken or the egg, rather that public transport be in place at a price and at times that are convenient to the public. At the moment there are roughly 28,500 residents in the Kingston/Kinston Beach/Blackmans Bay area.

A more regular and cheaper bus service to and around the Kingborough area would help to take the pressure of the Southern Outlet and ease traffic congestion in Hobart. Another positive aspect would be the reduction in exhaust pollution.

I host international students for the University of Tasmania, along with many other Kingborough families. The University placement officer, Melanie Wise commented to me that she could not understand why many students did not stay in the Kingborough area. The reasons are that a tertiary student does not stay are that:

- a Hobart Coach to the city, then transfer to Metro to go to University and repeat the procedure to return home costs for 1 working week (Mon-Fri):

Metro 10 Trip	\$ 11.50
Hobart Coach 10 trip (Kingston)	\$ 22.10
Total for Mon-Fri	<u>\$ 33.60</u>

The same student living in Opossum Bay can purchase an unlimited travel at any time Metro fare for 1 month for \$46.00

Comparing one working month Kingborough = \$134.40 to Opossum Bay (unlimited travel one month) = \$46.00 is a difference of \$88.40.

- The last bus to Kingston on Monday to Thursday leaves Franklin Square at 8.45pm.
- The last bus to Kingston on Sunday leaves Franklin Square at 5.30p.m.
- Bus services during the working day throughout Kingborough are at best intermittent, and during the weekend and public holidays almost non-existent.

The cheapest adult Hobart Coaches fare is a 'Budget 20' (20 trips) \$53.20

The cheapest adult Metro fare return is a '10 Tripper' (via the long route of Channel Highway) and is 9 sections and costs \$18.40 which equals per fortnight \$36.40

If a Metro service was to be introduced via the Southern Outlet the sections would be reduced and so therefore so would the fares.

Kingborough Municipality is the fastest growing municipality in Tasmania. At the moment new residents make sure that they have private transport. Without the public transport infrastructure in place, people develop a habit that is hard to break. However people would utilize a reliable and reasonably priced public transport system which at the moment does not exist in Kingborough.

The other problem that exists is the route reversal. For instance where I live if you want to catch a bus to Hobart then depending on the time of day there are three bus stops. One outside the Ambulance/Fire station, one opposite the station on Redwood Road and yet another opposite the station on Hawthorn Drive. Most bus stops are not defined with signage, timetables or shelters.

Considering the population just in Kingston, Kingston Beach and Blackmans Bay (28,500) the service we receive is disgraceful and the prices are appalling and there is no just reason why we should be discriminated against in this way.

I hope my letter has an impact on you and that this anomaly and discrimination is rectified. Fare prices were correct at the time of writing.

Yours sincerely,
S. Catherall.

Sally contacted the Government Prices Oversight Commission by telephone on 25 February 2003 to add the following comments to her submission. (Comments transposed by Neil Thristan – Research Officer GPOC)

Sally sought to comment on rising price of petrol, and the effect that it should/would have on Metro's patronage levels and the demand for Metro services, also the effect rising petrol prices would have on the demand for public transport in general.

Sally notes that it is the lower income groups that are the most affected by increasing petrol prices (i.e pensioners), as the cost of transportation impacts income directly. There is a high concentration of pensioners in the Kingston area therefore the demand for public transport in the Kingston would most likely be on the increase in line with increasing petrol prices.